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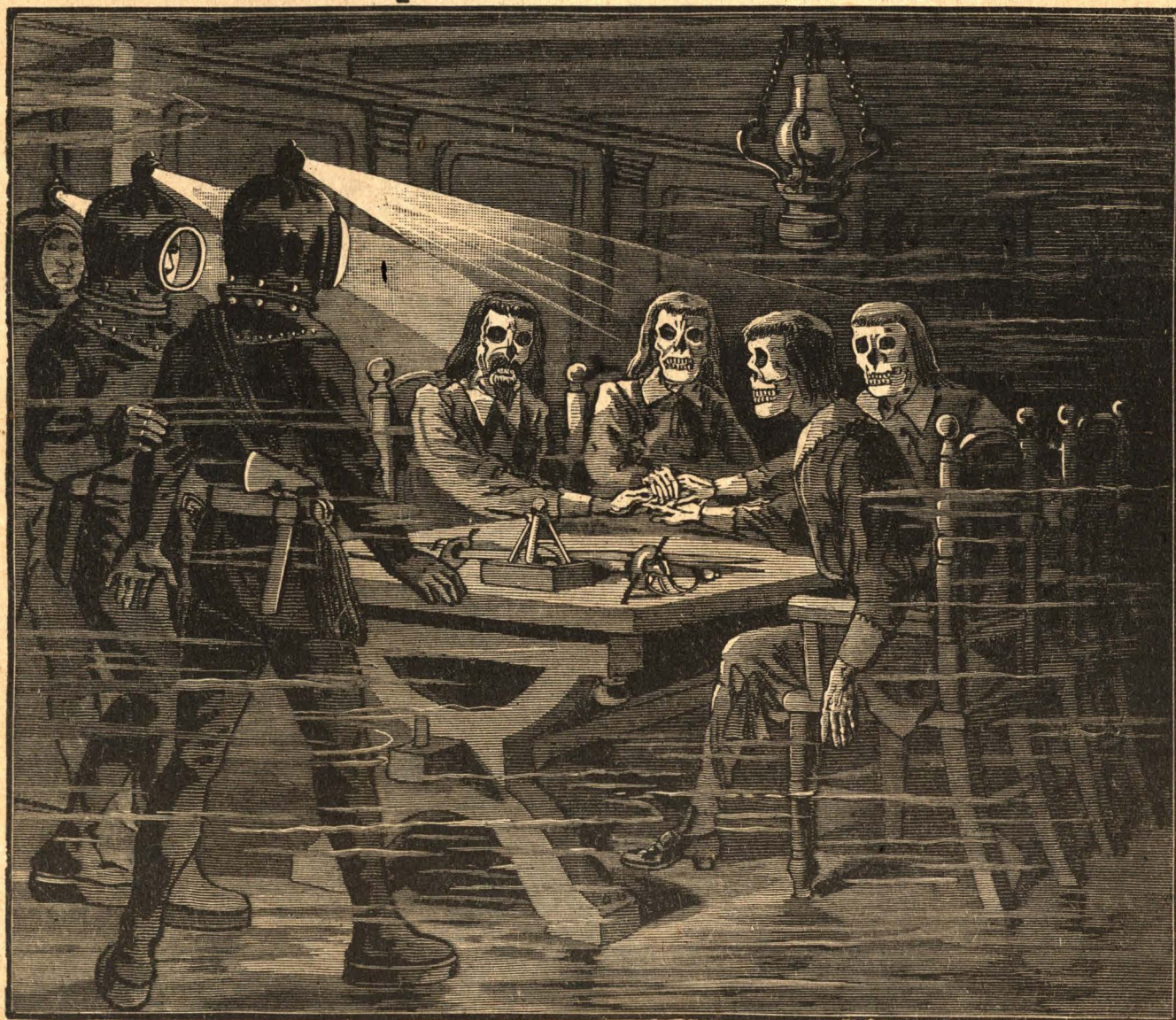
Vol. IV.

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Under the Equator

FROM ECUADOR TO BORNEO;
or, Frank Reade, Jr.'s Greatest Submarine Voyage.

By "NONAME."



The skeletons all sat erect as in life, and just as death had overtaken them. What was more, they had all crossed the right hand across the table as if their last act in life was a mutual oath. It was a striking scene.

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Under the Equator From Ecuador to Borneo;

OR,

Frank Reade, Jr.'s Greatest Submarine Voyage.

By "NONAME,"

Author of "Frank Reade, Jr.'s 'Sky Scraper,'" "Under the Yellow Sea," "Frank Reade, Jr.'s Prairie Whirlwind; or, The Mystery of the Hidden Canyon," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

FRANK READE, JR., AT HOME.

"WHAT will your trip be with your new submarine boat, Frank?"

The speaker was Clifford Carlton, a young member of the Scientific School. At the moment he was talking with Frank Reade, Jr., the world's most famous inventor, who scarcely needs an introduction to the reader.

They were standing in the yard of Frank's machine shops in Readestown, that miniature city which had been the birth place of generations of the Reades.

It was true that Frank Reade, Jr., had invented a submarine boat.

The mystery of deep water navigation had been solved and now the famous young inventor was about to take an under ocean trip with the submarine Clipper.

Not until now had he declared what his intentions were. He replied to Carlton briefly:

"I am going to follow the equator half way round the earth, or as far as it traverses the deep sea."

Carlton gave a sharp exclamation.

"Good!" he exclaimed, excitedly; "that will be wonderful indeed! The equator traverses some of the most wonderful parts of the ocean. What a voyage that will be!"

"I hope that it will prove instructive and entertaining," replied Frank.

"It certainly will. From what point will you make the start?"

"I shall follow the equator through the Pacific," declared Frank.

"It strikes the ocean upon the coast of Ecuador; thence to Borneo it is almost an unbroken expanse of sea and a voyage of thousands of miles."

"I am more than ordinarily interested in this project," declared Clifford. "When will you start?"

"Within three days."

The young scientist gave a start.

"So soon?" he exclaimed. "Oh, I had hoped—but—pardon me! I dare not tell you my dearest wish."

Frank gave his companion a keen look and then smiled grimly. He knew well what was upon the other's mind.

"Speak right out," he said with a laugh. "You can't any more than meet with disappointment."

"True!" cried Clifford. "Well, of course you know what it means to me to have the privilege which you will enjoy of seeing that wonderful portion of the deep sea. There is no use in beating about the bush. Flatly, Frank, I would give years of my life to go with you upon this submarine cruise!"

Frank seemed in a thoughtful mood for some moments. Then he said:

"Well, we have not made any special arrangement for carrying a passenger aboard the Clipper. There are three of us—myself and my two servants, Barney and Pomp."

"I will gladly pay whatever you choose for my passage," cried Clifford, eagerly.

"Not a bit of it," exclaimed Frank, generously. "You are very welcome to accompany us on our trip. I will see that a stateroom is made ready for you at once."

The young scientist could not express his delight in words.

He fairly embraced Frank.

"I will endeavor to repay you some time," he cried.

"Not at all," said Frank, peremptorily. "But now, do not forget that we start in three days. Can you be ready?"

"Yes; in less time."

"Very good! Be on hand, then, the day we sail."

"I will!"

Clifford Carlton hastened away with the joyful news to his school-mates and the professor in the Scientific School. It was, certainly, a privilege which should make them all envious.

Frank passed from the yard into another which was protected by a high wall and gates.

In the center of this yard, which covered more than an acre, was a deep tank or basin filled with water.

In this tank floated the famous new invention—the submarine boat.

Not much of it could be seen above the water.

But enough was visible to determine its shape, which was nearly that of a cigar.

The hull was made of closely jointed bands of toughest and lightest steel. The keel furnished sufficient ballast in solid lead to keep her level.

In each side of the hull were three windows of sections of heaviest plate glass, protected by an almost invisible blind of steel meshes.

From these observation windows much could be seen of the ocean bed and its wonders.

Upon the top of this cigar-shaped hull was a long dome-shaped cabin; also this was surrounded by the outer deck, which could only be used while the boat was on the surface.

In the cabin dome were circular windows. Forward was a pilot-house, with the steering gear and electric keyboard for the operating of the machinery.

Over the pilot-house was a powerful electric search-light, specially constructed for deep sea work.

Two light masts, fore and aft, were employed to keep the boat steady.

The interior of the Submarine Clipper was a wonder-land. Richly furnished and adorned with costly fittings, it was a floating palace.

Aft was the reservoir or tank which was used for depressing or elevating the boat.

This was done by simply admitting a rush of sea water and sinking the boat. Upon rising a pneumatic pressure forced the water from the chamber and would send the boat to the surface like a cork.

The engines were run by powerful dynamos. A twin-screw propeller gave the craft propulsion.

A chemical generator of great capacity kept the cabins constantly supplied with fresh oxygen, and consumed the carbonic acid gas as soon as it was formed.

With this meager description of the Submarine Clipper we will take the reader on to thrilling incidents of this story.

The trip under the Equator, as proposed by Frank Reade, Jr., truly held wonderful possibilities.

To make the entire circumference of the earth in this way was impossible, for the Equator crossed the continent of South America and Africa, where, of course, no submarine boat could travel.

So Frank marked out a definite and possible course, which extended from Ecuador, by cutting around a number of small islands to Borneo.

This distance was almost, if not quite, half the circumference of the earth.

At least, it was a tremendous voyage in a straight line, and would take the voyagers through the seas of Oceania, the most charming part of the Middle Pacific Ocean.

There were parts of the Pacific where the sea would be miles in depth.

Of course the boat could not descend to these depths on account of the tremendous universal pressure. But these regions were in small proportion.

Frank had carefully planned the whole affair. The trip around the Horn would be made on the surface, as the Clipper could travel faster in that way.

Then a small harbor on the coast of Ecuador named Pechuco was the point selected to start from.

Frank advanced to the edge of the basin. A small bridge of planks extended to the deck of the Clipper.

As the young inventor advanced a man leaped out of the pilot-house and pulled off his cap showing a shock of red hair.

"Shure, Mither Frank, and is it mesilf yez are lookin' for?"

"Yes, Barney, and Pomp also!" replied Frank.

"The naygur is it, sor? Shure, I'll call him!"

The man was an Irishman, beyond all peradventure. But he was Frank Reade, Jr.'s trusty friend and servant and possessed of as true a heart as ever beat in human breast.

Barney O'Shea, for this was his name, rushed to the door and shouted:

"Pomp, me hearty! Are yez there?"

"Wha' yo' want, I'ish?" came back the reply.

"Divil a bit, but Mither Frank wants yez."

A darky black as coal came tumbling up out of the cabin. He ducked and scraped before Frank.

"Barney and Pomp," said the young inventor, "I have decided when to start upon the new trip!"

Both servitors looked delighted.

"Yez don't mean it, sor!"

"Golly! amn't dat fine?"

Pomp cut a pigeon wing and Barney turned a handspring.

"Yes," continued Frank, "it will be in three days, and I want you to have everything in readiness. Do you understand?"

"Yo' can bet we does!"

"Begorra it'll be so!"

Both were about to dart away when Frank said sharply:

"Hold on!"

"Yas, sah."

"I'm not done with you yet."

"A'right, sah."

"I beg yez pardon, sor."

"There will be an extra man in our crew on this trip."

"An extra man is it, sor? Shure we kin do all the worruk."

"You don't understand. This man is a passenger. He is going with us to subserve the ends of science."

Barney and Pomp listened respectfully. Of course they could not demur.

"Now I want you to have a stateroom all ready for him. Calculate upon enough extra provisions, Pomp. In fact, reckon upon an extra man in the party."

Pomp ducked his head.

"A'right, sah!" he said. "I'se gwine to cook fo' jes' as many as yo' says. I'se bound to obey orders, sah!"

"Very good!" said Frank, "let me see how well you will do it."

Barney and Pomp were about to return to the cabin when a startling thing occurred.

There was a sudden terrific explosion, the outer wall of the yard went into the air in fragments full a hundred feet. Frank Reade, Jr., was conscious of the fact that the earth was rocking beneath his feet, and then became insensible.

CHAPTER II.

THE GREAT TRIP IS BEGUN.

BARNEY and Pomp, on the deck of the submarine boat, had come out of the explosion unscathed.

Both were hurled into the water of the tank, and this was probably what saved them.

A terrible scene of wreck and ruin it was which both beheld when they came to the surface and the dust had cleared a trifle.

A fearful explosion had taken place.

The outer wall and the corner of one of the shops was a heap of ruins.

Heaps of debris lay everywhere. Much had fallen into the tank. The Clipper had not escaped.

Her pilot-house was badly dented, and some of the handrail was missing from her deck.

The fact that she sat so low in the water was what had saved her from destruction.

"Mither av Moses!" gasped Barney, as he crawled out of the tank. "Phwat the divil is the matther? Is it struck by loightning we are?"

"Golly! I done fought I was trowed ober de moon!" exclaimed Pomp.

Dripping wet but unharmed, they climbed out of the tank; then they saw Frank lying unconscious.

With a wild, solicitous cry, Barney was quickly by Frank's side.

"Och hone! Mither Frank is killed entoirely!" he cried. "Bad cess to the omadhoun that did it!"

But Frank moved and opened his eyes; fortunately he was only stunned and not at all injured bodily.

A cry of joy escaped Barney's lips, and he dashed water in Frank's face. The young inventor was quickly himself again.

The noise of the explosion had of course attracted people from all quarters in the vicinity.

People came rushing in from the street, the workmen from the shops and a sort of panic reigned.

But Frank Reade, Jr., was now on his feet and quickly straightened matters out.

In the confusion he was cool and calm as need be.

Policemen were quickly at work trying to find a solution of the mystery, and it was quickly found.

In the debris there was found the body of a man frightfully mangled. He was at once recognized as the author of all the trouble.

His name was David Vane, and he was a noted Anarchist, who imagined that it was his duty to destroy the iron works of Frank Reade, Jr.

It was indeed a fortunate thing that nobody but the projector of the infamous scheme himself had been killed.

The crowd dispersed after a time and the affair terminated.

But Frank Reade, Jr., caused the break in the wall to be quickly boarded in, and this kept out the persistent crowd of sightseers who were anxious to inspect the submarine boat.

The Clipper's injuries were quickly repaired, and there was therefore no delay in the arrangements for the start upon the great cruise.

At length the day came.

Everything was in ship-shape order.

From the morning train Clifford Carlton alighted. He had made all preparations to go upon the famous trip.

The tank in which the submarine boat rested, was connected with a canal leading through locks down into the river, which in turn led to the sea.

Into this canal the boat was floated. Frank and Clifford Carlton stood on the deck, Barney was in the pilot-house, and Pomp below.

Frank had left the machine works in charge of a competent foreman. All the employees bid good-bye to the voyagers with a cheer.

This was taken up outside the yard by a host of excited people, who were waiting for a glimpse of the famous submarine wonder.

As the Clipper glided down into the river, it was seen that its banks were lined with people. A great shout went up.

Thus the Clipper left Readestown amid great enthusiasm. The voyagers stood on deck until a bend in the river hid the town from view.

The great trip was begun.

How would it terminate or what adventures the future held in store for them, of course the voyagers had no means of knowing.

But they were setting forth with stout hearts and confidence in the Clipper. This was half the battle.

The journey down the river to the sea was devoid of incident. In due time it was reached.

Then the Clipper began her voyage in earnest. Cleaving her way through the heavy rollers, she made good speed to the southward.

Frank did not intend to stop at any port, or to abate the speed of the Clipper until after Cape Horn was rounded and Ecuador was reached.

This part of the voyage was long and tedious.

The Clipper was an extremely fast sailer, but yet it was a long while ere the Straits of Magellan came into view, and the passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific was quickly made.

Around Adelaide Island, and straight to the north, the Clipper held its course.

Smooth seas were now encountered and a milder climate. The Clipper made fast time.

One day the coast of Ecuador was sighted. Frank took his bearings and found that they were hardly two hundred miles from Pechuco.

The next day the Clipper entered the little harbor and dropped anchor. It was a relief indeed to get a good and near view of the land.

There were a few vessels of the trading type in the harbor. These regarded the submarine boat with wonder.

Frank went ashore for a few hours, and even interviewed the governor of the little town.

Quite a number of the natives came down to the shore to take a look at the strange vessel.

Dozens of canoes and light craft thronged about the Clipper and Barney and Pomp, both of whom understood Spanish, had a good time chaffing the natives.

The Clipper was given a thorough underhauling here, for it was imperative that she should be in excellent trim.

She would travel a good ways under the surface and any defect in her mechanism would be fatal indeed to the voyagers.

Her machinery was overhauled, tested and oiled. The chemical generator was charged afresh, and then all was declared in readiness.

Two days sufficed for this. On the morning of the third Frank came on deck and announced that the start was to be made.

Barney and Pomp rushed into the pilot house with Frank. Clifford went into the cabin and to one of the big observation windows.

Frank took his bearings carefully and set his course.

This would first extend through the Galapagos Islands. Then there would be a clear course for hundreds of miles into the archipelagoes of the Central Pacific.

Frank placed his hand upon the electric key-board.

He pressed the lever, which closed and hermetically sealed every door around the boat.

Then with the prow of the Clipper pointing to the westward, he pressed the lever which opened the valves of the big reservoir.

There was a slight shock, a rumbling noise, the Clipper trembled slightly, and then, with a rush, went out of the sight of day.

Down to the bottom of the sea, in sixty fathoms of water, went the submarine boat.

The transition for a moment made everything dark aboard the Clipper.

But Frank instantly pressed an electric button, and every electric light aboard was ablaze.

It was as if they had been suddenly transferred to fairy land.

The young scientist, Clifford Carlton, was completely spellbound. He pressed close to the observation window, studying every wonderful thing which his gaze could select.

"It is grand!" he cried, ecstatically. "There is nothing above these depths or on land which can compare with them at all."

"Indeed it is a beautiful sight," agreed Frank, "but you will see grander things before the voyage is over."

"Oh, this is worth half my life!" cried Clifford.

The Clipper rested for a moment upon a bed of pure, white sand, studded with coral growth.

Then it rose gently to a height of some twenty feet above the ocean bed and shot forward.

It required constant care and a sharp watch in the pilot-house to sail the submarine boat.

Huge bowlders, or coral reefs at any moment might loom up in its path.

These it was necessary to evade, either by going around or over them.

Then the leviathan fish or great sea monster would essay an attack upon the Clipper.

It was necessary to avoid a collision with these, though once Barney nearly wrecked the boat by an unavoidable incident.

Frank and Clifford stood by one of the observation windows. Pomp was in the cooking galley.

Suddenly Barney felt his hair literally rise on end.

He was approaching the face of a huge coral cliff.

In its face yawned a deep mouthed cavern. As the submarine boat shot before this, a huge fish of the whale species darted out.

It was directly in the path of the Clipper.

There was no avoiding a collision.

Barney jammed the propeller lever back, but the momentum of the boat carried it forward.

There was a terrific shock.

Everything aboard the boat went tumbling and crashing in every direction. Frank and Clifford went sailing over chairs and table.

Pomp dove head first into his flour barrel.

When he came up gasping, he was nearer a white man than he had ever hoped to be.

"Golly fo' glory!" he gasped. "Wha' hab happened? Dat fool 'fishman hab jes' gone an' wrecked dis ar boat as suah as snuff!"

CHAPTER III.

STRANGELY ANCHORED.

"Goodness!" exclaimed Clifford, as he pulled himself out of a corner with an aching collar bone. "What on earth happened, Frank?"

The young inventor was crawling out from an entanglement with the table legs.

"We've struck something," he replied with an effort. "Barney! are you there?"

"Shure an' phwat's lift av mel!" came back the distant reply.

"What's happened?" shouted Frank.

"Shure there's the devil to pay!"

This was certainly probable, as the electric boat was rocking and gyrating furiously.

Frank staggered into the pilot-house.

The sight which met his gaze there was an astounding one.

Glancing forward through the plate glass windows, he saw the cause of the mischief at once.

The ram of the boat had literally impaled the huge fish. It was desperately striving to get away, but this seemed impossible.

There was the momentary danger that the Clipper would be overturned, or at least badly damaged against the reef.

But what was to be done?

"Begorra, Misther Frank!" cried the stupefied Celt. "I thried ivery way I cud to git out av the crather's way, but I cudn't do it, sor!"

"You did well enough, Barney!" cried Frank, "but the question is how are we going to get rid of the incubus?"

"That is a serious question!" cried Clifford, who had come upon the scene.

"But it must be done!" declared Frank, "or the monster will thrash us all to pieces!"

The huge fish was beating the water furiously with his tail. This twisted and wrenched the Clipper most seriously.

For a time the voyagers were in a desperate strait.

Then Frank Reade, Jr.'s inventive genius came to the rescue.

"I think I have an idea!" he cried.

"Phwat is it, sor?" cried Barney.

"Go down into the lower cabin and bring up the diving suits," commanded Frank. "You will find them in a locker down there."

"Diving suits!" exclaimed Clifford. "Would you dare venture out there, Frank?"

"Why, certainly!"

"But—if you should get in the vortex made by the monster's tail you would stand a chance to be overcome!"

"I shall have to risk that," said Frank. "Something must be done to save the boat."

"But what will you be able to do after you get out there?"

"I shall first kill the fish."

"Kill him?"

"Yes!"

"Will not that be difficult? He is such a monster it would take a good while to cut your way into a vital part."

"That is not my plan," declared Frank. "I will show you very quickly how I shall do that."

"I am much interested," declared the young scientist.

Barney had now produced the diving suit, which was of Frank's own invention, and truly a wonderful affair.

In general it resembled the ordinary diver's suit, but the life-line and air-pump was displaced by a chemical reservoir which the diver was able to carry upon his back.

This furnished the purest of oxygen for hours, and enabled the diver to travel about unimpeded by a multiplicity of lines.

Frank proceeded to don the suit. Barney attempted a protest.

"Shure, Misther Frank," he cried, "yez should let me go. If anything should happen to yez, phwat the devil wud the rist av us do?"

"I thank you for your kindly solicitude," said Frank, with a laugh, "but do not fear. I shall not be harmed."

The young inventor was now ready to leave the boat.

What was done must certainly be done quickly for the fish was floundering about most furiously.

There was momentary danger that the clipper would break in two or suffer some other fatal injury.

Frank entered the vestibule which led out upon the deck.

He carried a wire with him which was connected with the dynamos, and had a steel painted lance attached to its end.

Once in the vestibule, Frank arranged the wire through a small aperture in the door provided with a valve.

Then he closed the door into the cabin and stood alone in the vestibule.

It was but a moment's work to press a valve and the vestibule was filled with water.

Opening the outer door, Frank walked safely out on deck.

He was obliged to cling to the rail as he worked his way forward, so violently did the boat rock.

Those in the cabin watched him anxiously. Upon his success the safety of all depended.

Frank carried the lance in his hand and worked his way along until he was near the fish's head.

The creature was making violent efforts to free itself from the ram, but was unable to do so.

Frank waited until he was dormant again.

Then he poised the lance very carefully. Taking accurate aim he launched it at the fish.

It struck him right back of the gills, and was driven deep into the flesh. The pain of the wound caused him to renew his thrashings.

The violent rocking of the boat threw Frank from his feet, but he quickly recovered his balance.

He had given Barney directions what to do before leaving the cabin.

The Celt saw that it was his opportunity.

He pressed the electric key and sent the current into the wire. The effect was instantaneous.

As the fearful shock was transmitted from the imbedded lance to the fish's vitals, it gave a convulsive throe and lay quite still.

Volt after volt was sent coursing over the wire. The deadly work was most complete.

The present danger to the submarine boat was averted.

But it yet remained a prisoner, the weight of the body of the fish impaled upon the ram anchoring it most effectually.

There was no way but to cut the ram out of the fish's body. This was no light work.

But Frank went to work at it pluckily. Seeing that he was making slow progress, Barney volunteered, and went out to assist him.

Freed of its incubus the submarine boat was now able to go ahead once more.

Frank and Barney returned to the cabin safely.

It was a fortunate escape for the Clipper. There was good reason for mutual congratulation.

"On my word!" exclaimed Clifford. "I was sure that we would not escape destruction. That was a very powerful fish!"

"Indeed it was!" agreed Frank. "We escaped luckily!"

The Clipper now went booming on its way once more.

It was really an enjoyable sensation to travel under water in that way. Perhaps the one who enjoyed it the most was Clifford Carlton.

"It is like a wonderful dream!" he declared, "truly this is the experience of a lifetime!"

For another day the Clipper kept on at even speed.

Long sandy plains were traversed, deep valleys among high hills threaded and tremendous abysses crossed.

All sorts and manner of queer fishes and other denizens of the deep were seen.

There were coral caves, shining grottoes, blue caverns, and all manner of wonderful spectacles.

As Frank had predicted, the further they advanced into the Central Pacific the more wonderful the bed of the sea became.

When Carlton chanced to see some specially beautiful specimen

for which he felt a desire he had only to speak to Frank and the Clipper was at once stopped.

Some one of the party would don a diving suit and go out and recover it.

In this way the young scientist was rapidly adding to his collection. Of course this made him immensely happy. In fact he was in a transport of keen enjoyment.

For days things thus progressed most evenly.

There was no trouble with the mechanism of the boat.

The electric generator furnished the best and the purest of air for the craft.

The electric engine worked like a charm.

"This boat is the most wonderful of all inventions, Frank!" declared the young scientist, "its equal was never made!"

"I am afraid you are stretching that a little!" said Frank with a laugh. "Are you not?"

"Not a bit of it. The Clipper is a mighty triumph of genius."

Frank, who was extremely modest, withdrew before he could be made subject to any more such effusive compliments. Though he had no reason to doubt the other's sincerity.

Thus for days the Clipper kept on.

But thrilling adventures were in store.

It is said that calamities never come singly. The truth of this metaphor was soon demonstrated.

The Clipper one day was running smoothly across a sandy plain, when suddenly it came to an instant stop.

So sudden was the stop, that it was perceptibly felt in every part of the boat.

Frank, who was in the cabin, rushed out to the pilot-house.

"What is the matter?" he cried, rushing up to Barney.

The Celt was mystified.

"Shure, sor, the devil a bit can I tell!" he cried, "but the boat came to a quick sthrop, sor, an' all so sudden that it nearly put me troo der window, sor!"

Frank looked out of the window and saw that the boat rested upon the sandy bed of the plain.

CHAPTER IV.

BURIED IN A SAND DRIFT.

THEN an inkling of the truth dawned upon Frank.

"I have it!" he cried. "Some part of the machinery has given out!"

"Begorra, I'm of that moind mesilf!" agreed Barney. "Shure, sor, it cud be nothing else!"

"You struck nothing?"

"Devil a thing, sor!"

"How far were you from the bottom when the shock came?"

"About twenty feet, sor."

"Then it must be that the machinery has given out," declared Frank. "I will see to it."

At this moment Pomp came upon the scene.

"I done hear somefin' snap in de engine room, Marse Frank!" he cried.

"Then I will find it!" cried Frank.

He rushed down into the engine room. He quickly saw what was the matter.

One of the journals had become displaced and the machinery was clogged by this. It was an unfortunate break and would require some time for efficient repair.

Frank's face grew long.

"What is the matter?" cried Carlton, as he came tumbling down the stairway.

"The worst has happened!" declared Frank. "Now our machinery has gone back on us!"

"Is it a break which cannot be repaired?" asked Carlton, aghast.

"Oh, no, but it will delay us some while. Perhaps two days!"

"Yet it can be repaired?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Well," cried the scientist, cheerfully, "let us be thankful that it is no worse. If I can help you, Frank, call on me."

"I may need your help!" said the dismayed inventor, "but I will let you know later."

Frank threw off his coat and at once began work.

Barney who was a skilled machinist helped him. Pomp remained in the pilot-house with Carlton to guard against any possible danger.

For hours Frank and Barney worked on the broken journal.

Then an incident occurred to break up the work for a time. Indeed, it was a disaster which threatened the destruction of the boat.

Pomp and Carlton, in the pilot house, first saw it.

The search-light lit up the sea for many yards ahead. Objects were quite plain.

Suddenly what looked like a black wall came slowly surging into view. It was coming straight down upon the Clipper.

Pomp stared at the strange manifestation and cried:

"Golly sakes, wha'ebber am dat ting I'd like to know?"

"Mercy on us!" exclaimed Carlton; "it is coming right down upon us!"

"Marse Frank!" yelled Pomp; "fo' de lub ob Hebben come quick!"

Frank heard the call of alarm, and he and Barney left their work at once.

Up the stairway to the pilot house they sprung. A glance told Frank the truth.

It also gave him a fearful chill.

"My God!" he exclaimed, "it is a traveling quicksand!"

He alone was familiar with the nature of these curious deep sea phenomena.

Certain powerful undercurrents meet, and roll up in their volume huge masses of shifting sand which are sometimes carried many miles to another part of the sea.

There they may meet some obstacle to break or cut their volume, and they will instantly settle about this object frequently burying it many feet deep.

These treacherous shoals or movable islands are frequently formed, a positive menace to the mariner.

With awful horror Frank saw that the submarine boat was directly in the path of the shifting sands.

"My God!" he groaned. "We are likely to find an eternal tomb."

"What is that?" gasped Carlton. "Will it engulf us?"

"Yes!" replied Frank, "unless the current is sufficiently strong to carry it over us."

Appalled and for a time speechless the voyagers watched the approach of the seeming death.

Nearer every moment the rolling cloud of sands came.

Frank could see no way to break the deadly advance.

A cannon shot fired into it would have done it, just as a water-spout is annihilated.

But to do this was impossible, for they had no cannon. To get out of the way of the cloud was impossible also.

When the machinery had given out it had put a check upon the pneumatic engine as well as the electric engine; the boat could not be sent to the surface.

There was certainly no way but to meet their fate and trust in Providence.

The next moment the sifting sands were whirling about the Clipper. They revolved about it like a winding sheet. It was seemingly a deep sea snow storm.

Over the deck and into the crevices sifted the whirling sand.

Deeper it became and higher it rose over the windows. Soon the glass of the observation windows was blocked with one wall of sand.

It was a loose, light stuff, but nevertheless of sufficient tenacity to cling to the submarine boat and bury it.

Nothing could be seen from the windows. The creaking of the deck told of the ponderous weight upon it.

It was a horrible reflection.

With starting eyeballs the voyagers sat and stared blankly at each other.

No one could venture a plan, none could vouchsafe a word of hope. What was to be done?

"God help us!" said Carlton, hollowly. "Are we never to see the light of day again?"

"Begorra, it's buried intoirely we are!" cried Barney. "Shure, we'll niver be able to dig our way out av this!"

"Golly, an' I done fo'got to say mah prayers!" groaned Pomp.

"Is there no chance for us, Frank?" exclaimed Carlton, tensely.

"Yes," replied the young inventor, "but it is a scant one."

"Ah, what is it?"

"Some time, perhaps in a few hours, perhaps not for centuries, the currents may meet again in this spot and whirl all this sand away to another spot. We will emerge from our deep sea grave then."

"And not until then?"

"I fear not!"

"Is there no way?"

"I see none!"

Carlton groaned in horror.

"This is awful!" he cried. "Let us see if we at least cannot dig our way out of this bank!"

"What good would that do? We would then be many fathoms from the surface, and perhaps hundreds of miles from any island."

This was true, as all knew.

For a time great despondency oppressed all. Then Frank Reade, Jr., who was always plucky, cheered them up with an announcement.

"I am going to try and break my way out of this drift," he declared. "As soon as we get the machinery repaired, I will apply the pneumatic force to the reservoir. Perhaps the pumping out of the water will cause the boat to lighten and break its way through with the aid of the propeller."

"Hurrah!" cried Carlton, "let us try that by all means!"

At once work was resumed on the machinery by Frank and Barney. It was calculated that they could exist aboard the Clipper for a year with good care.

The chemical generators would last indefinitely and the stores were in plenty.

So altogether all felt more hopeful.

"Why, I believe we could dig the boat out in that time!" declared Clifford.

"We might make a good trial!" agreed Frank, "it depends upon the depth of sand over us!"

"I don't believe it is over a few feet!"

"Ah, it may be two hundred!"

"In that event we are forever lost!"

"At least we will not give up yet!" cried Frank.

Within twenty-four hours Frank and Barney had replaced the journal and straightened out the machinery.

The reservoir was full of water.

Frank started the pneumatic pump.

It was of tremendous power, and in a few moments the escaping water had made a literal tunnel in the sand.

This seemed easily displaced, and was evidently not packed very solid.

This fact gave Frank much hope. But the fact yet remained after much pumping that the buoyancy of the boat was not sufficient to raise it an inch in the sand.

It was anchored for good apparently. Once more the spirits of the submarine voyagers were depressed.

But as before Frank Reade, Jr., came to the rescue in his cheerful manner.

"We are not beat yet!" he said. "I have another plan!"

"What is it?" asked Clifford.

"First I want to see if we can tunnel through this drift!" said the young inventor, "then I can judge whether my new plan will work or not."

"A tunnel, eh?" cried Carlton. "Give me a spade. I am with you!"

There were shovels aboard the Clipper. All of the voyagers donned their diving suits.

Then Frank opened the vestibule door and went out.

As he had hoped, the sand was very loosely packed about the boat. In digging the tunnel, the superfluous sand was trodden solidly under foot, this leaving a sufficient passage.

But before long the difficulty of this plan was quickly made manifest.

The sand tunnel would cave in and threatened the burial of the projectors. What was to be done?

Discomfited, Frank returned to the cabin of the Clipper. But even in that moment a new idea occurred to him.

Water could be drawn from the sands by suction and Frank dug a well just off the deck of the Clipper.

Into this he placed a hose connected with the pneumatic reservoir pumps.

Setting the pumps at work, he was much gratified to find that he had the magic combination.

The volume of water from the hose was powerful, for the pumps were capable of tremendous pressure.

This directed against the sandbed began to rapidly disintegrate it. As fast as the water was pumped from the well in the sand, it ran into it again.

This made the desirable circulation and was most effective. Gradually a large cavity began to form about the submarine boat.

And the upper pressure of the sand being relieved, the boat began gradually to rise from its bed. Sand filled in under it and made a firm support.

It was only a foot or so at a time, but it was progress, and this was the main point.

Gradually the boat was thus raised from its sandy grave.

One fortunate thing was that the depth was not great. Only fifteen feet of the sand covered the deck.

This was suddenly displaced and water from above rushed down. It was a question now only of time.

Frank kept at work with the hose clearing the sand away. The submarine boat kept rising.

Suddenly it made a leap upward. It cleared the deposit of sand and would have gone up many fathoms to the surface.

But Frank opened the reservoir and filled it once more with water. The Clipper remained suspended in the ocean current once again.

The shifting sands had all settled in a compact mass.

But they were cheated of their prey. The submarine boat had thrown off the deadly yoke.

There were yet tons of sand on the deck and it filled all crevices. But Frank did not attempt to clean this off by any laborious process.

He knew that the quick passage of the boat through the water would wash it clean enough.

Carlton and Barney and Pomp were overjoyed at their release from the sands.

"A new lease of life!" cried Clifford; "thanks to your clever work, Frank, we still live!"

"And I have a strong belief that we shall make this trip under the Equator with complete success!" declared Frank; "if we do not I shall be very much disappointed."

CHAPTER V.

THE TROPICAL ISLE.

No time was wasted in the vicinity. The submarine boat was quickly put under way.

None of the crew had any special desire to linger in the vicinity.

So the Clipper shot away once more upon her course.

But events were following each other in swift succession. Suddenly Frank, who was in the pilot-house, gave a great cry.

"What is it?" asked Carlton, breathlessly, as he rushed in upon Frank.

"Look!" cried the young inventor, "do you see anything unusual?"

"My soul!" exclaimed Clifford. "We are going up a mountain."

"So it seems!" said Frank, "but the truth is, we have come to land!"

"To land?"

"Yes. We are nearing the shores probably of an island. We shall encounter many such before we reach Borneo!"

It is needless to say that young Carlton was interested.

"Will you not go around it?" he asked.

"No!" replied Frank. "I am going to the surface and make an examination of this island. It may be one which is not on record."

This was a welcome announcement to the young scientist.

He saw the opportunity to make further research, and so he for a time forgot the thrilling incidents which had occurred.

Up the submarine rise went the Clipper slowly. It was necessary to use great care.

For there stood in the way huge rocks, cliffs and many other obstacles, which the boat might strike at any unguarded moment.

But it did not, and suddenly the electric light began to grow pale.

"Here we go!" cried Frank.

"Up into the light of day shot the submarine boat. It was quite a remarkable transition for the voyagers.

A wonderful scene it was which was spread to view.

The submarine boat rolled in the ground swell of a bay. Directly in the face was the island, which was a literal gem.

The light of day was extremely welcome to the voyagers after their long period at the bottom of the deep.

They crowded out upon the deck and all engaged in a critical survey of the shore before them.

The isle was of the character quite common in that part of the Pacific.

It was tropical, and waving palms and jungle growth were plainly visible from the deck of the Clipper.

There was a balmy fragrance in the air, which was delightful, and the spirits of all felt the good effect.

"Is it not splendid!" cried the scientist, "how I will enjoy putting my foot on land again!"

"It looks like a sizable island!" declared Frank. "I wonder what it is called on the chart?"

"Shall we not go ashore?" asked Clifford.

"You and Barney may go now if you choose. I am going first to take my bearings. I want to learn whether I have greatly departed from the line of the Equator or not."

"All right!" cried Clifford joyously. "Are you ready, Barney?"

"Begorra, yez may be sure av that!" cried the Celt readily. "I'm wid yez ivery toime!"

Pomp looked eager but did not demur. Frank said:

"Wait awhile, Pomp; we will have our time later! Probably we will have to go ashore and pull them out of a scrape anyway."

The young inventor's words were prophetic, as after events proved.

There were aboard the submarine boat a number of light canoes for landing purposes and just such a contingency as the present.

One of these was brought out and launched from the deck.

Clifford and Barney were armed with rifles and geological tools.

Thus equipped, they paddled to the shore.

Frank proceeded to take his observations.

The result was that he found to his gratification that they were scarcely half a league out of their course.

Barney and Clifford had now been absent some while.

Reaching the shore they drew the canoe out of the water and carried it far up among the cliffs.

"Now, Barney!" said Clifford, "let us begin our explorations. Had we not better strike right into the interior?"

"Begorra, sor!" cried the Celt, "that is for yez to decide. But if I war axed fer my opinion I should think it would be better to go along the shore for a ways!"

"Ah, and what would be the special advantage of that?"

"Shure, sor, we cud luk for some high cliff to climb an' fust get a view av the island, sor. Then we cud tell if there war any cannibals or the likes av thim, which we moight axidintly sthumble upon in any other way. Suit yesilf, sor!"

Clifford perceived the logic of the Celt's reasoning at once.

He exclaimed:

"You are right, Barney. We will follow your ideas!"

So they set out along the shore. Passing around a bend, the submarine boat passed from sight.

Clifford found new wonders upon every hand as he passed along. He discovered beautiful and rare shell fish in the sands, and wonderful mineral evidences in the cliffs.

"This island is geologically rich," he declared. "This is indeed a treat, to be enabled to explore it."

"Begorra, I'm afther hoping there is no cannibals on it," said Barney, with a shrug of his shoulders.

"Ah," exclaimed Clifford, "it seems to me you stand much in fear of those gentry."

"Bejabers, there's good reason for it," averred Barney. "They be the divils! Shure, I've no inclination to be roasted and ate up aloive!"

"Nor I, for that matter," replied Clifford, laughing at Barney's earnestness, "but we will hope that nothing of the kind will occur."

"Shure, I hope not, sor!"

They were now approaching a high eminence, which formed a part of the precipitous cliff.

Barney exclaimed:

"Phwy not climb that, sor?"

"All right!" agreed Clifford; "let it be so!"

So Barney led the way up the steep ascent. The further up they went the wider and grander was the view.

Clifford was spell-bound at its mighty scope. He was more than anxious to reach the summit.

This was soon accomplished.

And there, below the voyagers, was spread the interior of the island in its entirety.

It was a wonderful spread of landscape peculiar to a tropical region.

There were plains and mountains, rivers and creeks, and small lakes. Deep jungles and wild forests.

In short, a diversity of scenery, such as it would have been difficult to find under other circumstances, or in any other part of the world.

Clifford gazed upon it spell-bound.

"The flora of this island is something wonderful!" he finally ejaculated. "What of its fauna?"

But this seemed complete also.

The branches of the trees and the air held a variety of beautiful birds, whose gay plumage and rippling songs were most enlivening.

A cougar was seen upon a distant tree trunk. Small goats fed upon a hillside near. Rabbits were in the brush. Truly this was a wonderful island.

"What an island Eden!" cried Clifford; "strange if all these wonders are not presided over by man!"

Thus far no sign of a human being had been seen.

But now from above distant tree tops a column of smoke was seen ascending high in air.

"A foire!" cried Barney. "Shure, sor, the island is inhabited!"

The young scientist gazed at the distant smoke as if he were loath to believe this.

"From what other cause can that smoke arise?" he muttered. "It must be in very truth that this gem of an island is the abode of favored human beings."

CHAPTER VI.

THE CASTAWAY.

THE smoke certainly seemed to support the theory that the island was inhabited.

There could be no volcano upon that flat tract of forest land. The smoke could not arise from any easily explained natural cause.

"Begorra, I towld yez so!" cried Barney, wildly. "Wud yez luk at that, sor? Shure, it's the cannibals!"

Barney's exclamation seemed not at all far fetched.

The sight which caught Clifford's gaze caused him to exclaim:

"Cannibals! Can it be?"

Across an opening or clearing upon the bank of a river a number of human forms were seen to pass.

They were half naked and beyond doubt savages.

All carried javelins, and one of them had a goat slung over his shoulder which seemed evidence that they had been on a hunt.

Whether they were cannibals or not it was not easy to say. But Barney called attention to one startling fact.

"Shure, sor!" he cried. "Wud yez see that man in the middle av them wid his hands tied behind him. Shure they'll ate him alive!"

It was true that in the file there marched a man with his arms bound and evidently a prisoner.

At that distance his appearance was not unlike that of the others.

"My soul! it can't be a white man, can it?" gasped Clifford.

"I think not, sor," rejoined Barney, "it's wan av their own kind!"

Clifford had forgotten all else in his newly awakened interest in the cannibals' captive.

The thought that Barney's premise might be correct, and that these were really cannibals, filled his soul with horror.

The possibility that the prisoner might, indeed, suffer so terrible a fate nearly resolved him to go to his rescue.

After some moments' study of the situation, he exclaimed:

"I think it is horrible, Barney!"

"Begorra, so do I, sor!"

"We ought not to stand idly by and see a human being suffer such a horrible fate!"

Barney rubbed his hands gleefully at the prospect of lively work.

"Shure, sor, I'm wid yez!" he cried. "If yez say the wurrud, I'll go down wid yez an' make a foight fer to save him!"

"A la Robinson Crusoe and man Friday!" laughed Clifford. "All right, Barney, let us do it."

They noted the course taken by the cannibals.

They marched down to the bank of the river, and proceeded to embark in canoes.

Down the river toward the sea they floated in these.

It now became a question as to what their destination was to be, and how to intercept them.

They were proceeding down the river. To attempt to cut them off by going through the intervening stretch of wood and jungle seemed an utter impossibility.

"What shall we do, Barney," exclaimed Clifford, in a quandary.

"They are evidently coming down to the shore."

"Thin, sor, I'm afther thinkin' the best thing we kin do is to cut along the shore, sor, an' head them off."

"I think you are right," agreed Clifford. "If we do not succeed in doing that, we can, at least, follow up the river until we find them."

No time was to be lost.

Down the cliff they scrambled. Soon they were upon the shore below.

The mouth of the river could not be far distant. They hastened along the sands with all speed.

Suddenly there came a visible break in the shore line.

"Shure there's the mouth av the river!" cried Barney. "We'll soon be there!"

They redoubled their exertions for fear that the cannibals would succeed in reaching the point first.

But when they reached the shore of the little bay made by the river the canoes were not yet in sight.

But turning a little angle in the bank they came upon a most astounding scene.

For a moment both were too overcome with horror to make much comment.

There in the sands were a number of driven stakes.

They were charred and blackened, and there were ashes all about them. But in these ashes were the objects which gave them such horror.

They were human bones.

The disintegrated skeletons of many human beings were scattered about the vicinity.

The truth was easily seen.

The natives of the beautiful isle were indeed cannibals, and these were the remains of some of their victims.

"Mither presarve us!" cried Barney, with a shiver, "it's a hard-lukin' soight. I felt sure they were cannibals; I wud have taken me oath!"

"Well, you guessed aright!" said Clifford, with fearful repugnance at the scene spread before him; "it is a most horrible thing. If I get a line drawn on those chaps, I'll cure some of them of their fiendish appetite."

"Bejabers, that's the koind 'of talk I loike!" cried Barney. "I think we'd better holde here behind these threes, sor, until they come along."

"Yes, if they come to this spot."

"Bejabers, there they are now!"

The two explorers leaped behind a clump of palms just in the nick of time.

Around a bend and into the little bay shot a canoe load of the cannibals.

Others followed and soon all were in sight. They made directly for the former scene of their orgies.

"Bejabers, they're coming roight here!" cried Barney.

"Let them come," said Clifford, tensely.

Stalwart, black-skinned fellows they were and hideously tattooed.

As they swayed at the paddles they indulged in a strange, weird chant which resounded curiously upon the air.

Straight for the burnt stakes they came and drove their canoes far up on the shore.

Then they leaped out and the explorers got a near view of them. They were a full score in number.

And now the prisoner stepped out on the beach.

At sight of him Barney and Clifford gave a mighty start.

"Ye Gods!" gasped Clifford, "it is a white man!"

"Mither of Mary!" ejaculated the Celt, "that is thrue sor,"

Tall and erect was the prisoner, with a complexion burned deeply by the tropic suns.

His features were regular and intelligent. As near as Clifford could judge, he was a type of seaman. Perhaps a castaway.

His face showed lines of suffering and anxiety, yet his bearing was calm, as befitted a brave man going to his death.

The leader of the cannibals, a powerful, evil visaged brute, gave some guttural orders to his followers.

The prisoner turned his haggard face toward the wretch and cried:

"You dirty dog! Perhaps you think I'm going to make good meat for ye! By ther big whales, I'll choke ye if I can, as sure as my name is Bill Brace!"

Clifford knew now for a certainty that the prisoner was a seaman.

"Barney!" he whispered, "we must save his life!"

"Begorra, I'm wid yez!" replied the Celt. "How shall we do it?"

"Our repeaters are good for half that crew of barbarians before they could close on us. Let us pick our men!"

This was done.

By this time the cannibals had led their victim, Bill Brace, to the stake and were binding him to it.

"Now!" whispered Clifford.

Both rifles spoke.

Crack-ack!

Crack! Crack-ack!

As fast as the repeaters could be worked the bullets were poured into the savage horde.

They began to drop right and left. They saw nothing of their assailants but a cloud of powder smoke.

Consternation seized them and they incontinently beat a retreat, sending a flight of javelins into the palm clump, however, one of which cut its way through Barney's sleeve.

The rescued sailor was in a paroxysm of delight.

"That's it, friends! Keelhaul 'em!" he shouted. "Don't give 'em a chance. Thank God! ye've come jest in time to save my life. Whooray!"

"You are right, we have, friend," cried Clifford, as he ran out and cut the fellow's bonds. "It was a close pinch for you!"

Bill Brace danced a hornpipe, so delighted was he.

"Great whales!" he cried, "how did ye git here and where did ye come from? Why, I don't think any other white men have visited this island for half a century!"

"We came here in a submarine boat," replied Clifford.

Bill Brace looked mystified.

"Blow me if I don't know every craft from a cat-head to a full rig-

ged clipper, but I never heard of that kind of a ship before! Say it agin, mate!"

"A submarine boat," replied Clifford, "is one which travels under the water."

Bill Brace scratched his head.

"I had a dream t'other night," he said, "powerfully like this. I wonder if I'm dreaming agin?"

"No!" replied Clifford, decidedly. "I will prove it all to you, and you will understand later. But may I ask how you came here?"

"Sartin!" replied Bill. "I drifted here!"

"Drifted?"

"Exactly! You see our ship was the Lucille, brig of Philadelphia, bound for the Cook Islands and Oceania ports. We struck a typhoon and all her masts went by the board."

"We tried to cut 'em away but couldn't, and every man had to shift lively for his life. The Lucille turned over all of a sudden and went down."

"I was the only man on board lucky enough to get clear of the vortex. I swam until I found a spar. Then I drifted for twenty hours, and finally came to this island. I fell into the hands of the natives, of course. They have kept me for eight weeks trying to fat me so that I would make good eating. You came up just in time to fool them."

CHAPTER VII.

THE CORAL DEPTHS.

BILL BRACE'S story was told in a straightforward, candid way. There was no reason for disbelieving it.

"We are very glad to have been able to rescue you," said Clifford. "It will not be safe for you to remain longer on these islands."

"Jericho!" gasped the sailor, "don't tell me that you don't intend to ship me aboard your craft! I'm a first-class seaman, and am willing to be put anywhere from the fore-castle to the maintop."

"Unfortunately," laughed Clifford, "we have neither fore-castle nor maintop on board our ship."

Brace looked astonished.

"Great whales!" he ejaculated, "what kind of a craft is your'n? I'm mighty curus to see it!"

"And see it you shall," declared Clifford, "but just now I think we had better make sure of our safety."

The sailor gave a start.

"Right!" he cried. "I reckon there's another bigger gang coming down behind this one. We had better git right out an' take no chances!"

"Come, Barney!" cried Clifford. "We have got to get back to the Clipper as quick as we can."

Barney, who had been banging away at the retreating cannibals, cried:

"All right, sor!"

Then as he turned about, he beheld a sight which gave him a mighty thrill.

At the top of his lungs he yelled:

"Luk out there, Mистер Clifford! They're coming like divils behind yez!"

Clifford and Brace turned and beheld an astounding sight.

A tremendous force of the cannibals were coming along the beach. Retreat was cut off in that direction.

What was to be done?

To go in the opposite direction was impossible, for the mouth of the river intervened.

To go into the interior of the island, where they might get lost, would be extreme folly.

"Mercy on us!" gasped Clifford; "we are lost!"

Two rifles could not hope to hold at bay such a tremendous force. The situation was a desperate one.

Whatever was done must be done quickly. This was evident.

"Belay me!" gasped Bill Brace, "I'm beat out now! We're in fer a squall, shipmate!"

But at this last moment the crack of firearms was heard. Several of the savage crew fell.

Then all eyes were turned upon a craft which had just rounded the point of land and came into the bay.

It was the Clipper.

The joy of the three cornered men can hardly be described.

"Hooray!" cried Barney. "Shure, it's the Clipper an' Mистер Frank!"

"We are saved!" cried Clifford, joyfully. "Frank is right on time!"

The report of their rifles, a few moments before, had been heard by Frank and Pomp.

Alarmed at their long absence, Frank had started the Clipper slowly along the shore.

Hearing the rifle shots, he knew there was trouble, and at once put on all speed.

It was lucky that he had done this. The least bit of a delay longer would have sealed the fate of the three on shore.

The hot fire from the submarine boat, and a counter fire from the three men on shore, caused a panic among the cannibals.

They hesitated, and came to a halt.

It was the desired chance.

Upon the river bank the other cannibals had left their canoes.

It was but a moment's work for Clifford to spring into one of these, and the others followed.

The paddles were wielded with all speed until beyond the range of the poisoned darts and javelins of the foe.

The submarine boat came into the mouth of the river to meet the canoe.

The result was, that Barney, Clifford and Brace all climbed safely aboard.

The sailor of course regarded the Clipper with amazement.

But there was no time for special comment just then.

Once on board the Clipper of course the cannibals could be defied. Indeed they had already retreated into the interior of the island.

Then mutual explanations followed.

Bill Brace told his story again, and all were deeply interested. He appeared to be a bluff, good-hearted type of sailor.

Frank at once welcomed him aboard the submarine boat.

"I don't see how I can do otherwise than take you along with us, Mr. Brace!" he said. "I certainly will not put you back into the hands of the cannibals."

"All of which I appreciate, skipper!" replied Bill, doffing his cap. "I'll try an' even up my passage. Ye'll never ask Bill Brace to obey orders. He's allus ready when they cum!"

So it came about in this peculiar manner that the crew of the Clipper was thus augmented by one.

But on the whole nothing was to be lost by it.

An extra man was really needed aboard the Clipper.

There was more than enough work for Barney and Pomp and Bill Brace's services were extremely welcome; he was a thorough seaman.

Once more the submarine Clipper was on her deep water voyage.

The island so oddly discovered was soon forgotten in the train of exciting incidents which followed so quickly.

It was, of course, a positive marvel to Bill Brace how the Clipper could sail under the sea.

But he soon became accustomed to the new order of things and worked in very quickly to become a first-class man.

Indeed he developed many startling traits which made warm friends of the other voyagers.

"By the ghost of Mother Carey!" cried Brace, "I like this ere craft and her skipper right well and I would like to make a regular berth aboard her!"

The Clipper now entered seas which differed somewhat from those through which she had been sailing.

Most wonderful scenes were of hourly occurrence.

There were great forests of vari-colored coral, and at times it seemed as if this wonderful production of the marine insect had taken almost human shape in the depths below.

Thus far, somewhat singularly, not a single sunken vessel had been encountered.

Now, however, the first was discovered. Pomp had that honor.

Passing through a dark valley, Pomp was in the pilot-house, and saw shadowy outlines at his right which at once excited his curiosity.

"Dat am berry queer," he muttered. "It looks fo' all de world jes' like a sunken ship. Maybe it am; I done fink I take a good look at it."

With which the darkey turned the full force of the search light in that direction.

This showed that his first premise was correct. There was revealed in the brilliant light a dismantled vessel of a type not now seen upon the high seas.

It was incrustated thickly with coral from hull to topmasts! This was brilliant in the light of the electric search-light.

"What a beautiful sight!" cried Clifford, enraptured. "It looks like a phantom vessel!"

"Stop the boat, Pomp!" cried Frank. "Let's take a look at her."

"A'right, sah!" cried the darkey.

The submarine boat came to a stop not twenty yards from the sunken ship. All crowded to the observation windows.

"Upon my word," cried Frank, "she is an old Spanish galleon, and must have laid here for two centuries."

"Yes," agreed Clifford, "it has been nearly as long as that since vessels of that type cruised in these seas."

"Messmates," said Bill Brace, excitedly, "there's treasure aboard that ship, an' you can bet on it!"

"The Spanish ships all carried large treasure," agreed Clifford.

"What say you, Frank? Shall we—"

"What?"

"Explore the old wreck?"

"Of course!" cried the young inventor, readily. "Bring up the diving suits, Barney."

"All roight, sar!"

Barney dove down below after the diving apparatus. He soon came up with it.

He brought up three suits.

"It lays between you and Pomp which shall go with us," said Frank to Barney.

"I done fink it am mah chainece now," cried Pomp.

"Begorra, Mистер Frank has small use fer the loikes av yez," cried Barney, contemptuously.

Just the same, Pomp was elected to go with the explorers. Barney was disappointed, but too sensible to demur.

He and Bill Brace were thus left to guard the Clipper until the return of the explorers.

Frank, Clifford and Pomp soon were ready to leave the cabin.

Attired in the diving suits, they soon had emerged upon the deck and were directing their footsteps toward the galleon.

As they neared the ancient ship they saw that bell mouthed cannon yet gaped from its port-holes, and upon the forward deck there was also a large swivel gun.

All was deeply incrustated with coral which made it difficult to tell just whether these guns were of brass or iron.

Frank mentally noted that the sunken craft carried a good many guns for a trading galleon.

But in those early days he remembered that the ancient chronicles credited all sea-going vessels with an armament.

Pirates were plentiful, and the vessel sailing the high seas without guns and a good stout-hearted crew was apt to fare rather hard.

It was not difficult work to cross the intervening distance to the sunken vessel.

Frank was the first to reach it. The sand had drifted up almost to a level with one of the ports so that it was not difficult to clamber aboard.

Soon they were upon the deck of the ancient vessel.

A curious scene it was, indeed, which met their gaze and held them for a time spell-bound.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SUNKEN GALLEON.

Of course but little could be seen of the details of the vessel, so deeply was it incrustated with coral.

But the masts with the rigging were easily delineated, and the gangway with the boats on their davits were complete.

And this fact was a suggestion in itself.

Doubtless the ship had gone down before the boats could possibly be lowered, which would seem to show that the vessel had been rid-dled with shot.

It was not to be expected that any vestige of her crew could be found remaining.

But as the divers passed forward all came to a sudden startled halt. There, half reclining against the rail, were the outlines of a human skeleton.

Time, the action of the water, and the work of the coral insects had preserved it in outline if not in exact composition.

It was quite useless for the explorers to attempt conversation under the water.

Not unless the helmets were placed close together could they make themselves heard.

But they could easily employ signs to convey their thoughts, and did so.

Leaving the encrusted skeleton in the spot where it had for so many years remained intact, the voyagers passed on forward.

The entrance to the fore-castle was found. But the planking was rotten, so that they did not venture into it.

They turned and retraced their steps aft.

This soon brought them to the main companionway, which led to the gun deck.

These stairs were fairly sound, and they descended.

The scene upon the gun deck was vastly different from that of the upper deck.

Here the timbers had escaped the preserving influence of the coral insect.

They were covered with a coating of slime and submarine moss, which made it difficult for the explorers to keep on their feet.

Great festoons of submarine weeds hung from the timbers, and made one think of going into a literal sea cavern.

Little fishes swam out and scurried away like mischievous elfs. A huge eel slid out of one of the open ports.

With some difficulty the explorers made their way across the gun-deck of the sunken vessel.

The old time carronades were in their places. But little else was to be found of the armament.

The action of the water and time had doubtless consumed all.

Frank led the way with some difficulty along the slippery flooring until the door of the forward cabin was reached.

It yielded to his touch, for the lock had long since rusted out.

Frank pushed the door in. The scene which met the gaze of the explorers was a thrilling one.

The light of the electric lamps on their helmets made all quite plain.

The cabin was richly furnished with antique oaken tables, chairs and couches which had once doubtless boasted a costly upholstery.

As the cabin had been closed up, the coral insects and the submarine plants had not been able to encroach upon it.

Of course decay had placed its work upon the appointments, yet it was very much the same as when the ship had gone down so long ago.

A great table stood in the center of the cabin.

Upon this was a globe, sextant, quadrant, compass, still intact, and a number of metal frames for charts, the latter having rotted away.

There were also the metal bindings of books, various metal knick-knacks and the cabin lamp.

Also across one end of the table lay three rusted swords, with handles of ivory and gold.

But the sight which claimed the attention of all, was a ghastly one. About the cabin table there were four chairs.

In each was a connected skeleton. The flesh had not entirely dis-integrated the bones and joints, but had shriveled and perhaps been preserved to an extent by the action of the saline parts of the water.

However this was, the skeletons all sat erect as in life, and just as death had overtaken them.

What was more, they had all crossed the right hand across the table as if their last act in life was a mutual oath.

It was a striking scene.

What the nature of that compact and what the last words upon the lips of the drowned men only God could tell.

It was a deep, awful mystery of the sea depths. It would never be known on earth.

Near the cabin stairs the prostrate skeleton of a man was found.

It was very likely that of a servant who had attempted to make his escape.

For some moments the three divers stood silently gazing upon the strange scene.

Then Frank advanced and touched one of the skeletons. It was as rigid as steel.

Upon the table lay a pile of gold coins. These were intact, for the water can have no effect upon this precious metal.

Frank picked one of these up and looked at the date. It marked the year 1670.

This was milled more than two hundred years previous. The gal-leon had been long under the sea.

Clifford put his helmet close to Frank's now, and cried:

"Do you think there is treasure aboard this ship?"

"It is possible!" replied Frank. "At least we will search for it."

"It would hardly be in this cabin, I think!"

"No, these old galleons always had a treasure chamber in the hold. Let us look thither."

"All right! Will you lead the way?"

"Yes."

With this Frank passed through the cabin and into the after cabin. Here a fearful scene was witnessed.

Full half a hundred skeletons in various positions were here gath-ered.

It was evidence of the sudden sinking of the boat.

And as Frank passed through this cabin he came to the stairs lead-ing down into the hold.

These were well preserved.

Indeed, the deeper one got into the old vessel the better preserved it was found to be.

Upon this lower deck, or the hold, as it was called, was the powder magazine and storerooms.

The magazine was well filled with powder, and evidently had been in use when the ship sank.

For two skeletons were found at the well in the act of hoisting can-isters of powder. Another skeleton was in the magazine.

This caused Frank a deal of sharp study.

"Perhaps the ship was in action," he muttered. "And yet, why did so many perish in the cabins?"

But as they passed forward from the magazine the swash of the outer sea was felt.

Then a huge aperture was revealed in the ship's side.

This was plainly made by a solid shot and had been the sinking of the vessel. By means of signs the explorers agreed upon this.

At the extreme end of the hold Frank came upon an iron door. It was set firmly in the oaken frame, and in its day had been almost im-pervious to attack.

But the young inventor easily kicked it from its rusty hinges now. A wonderful scene was revealed.

There were huge chests piled one upon another. These were of vari-ous kinds of metal.

Excitedly the explorers now fell to breaking these open.

They were for the time buoyed up with the belief that each one of the chests held heaps of gold.

But the first chest was empty. Six of them proved in succession to be the same.

Then the seventh was found filled to the brim with coin.

But alas! It was neither gold nor silver, but copper and brass. The coins were Spanish and all of a low denomination.

However, their efforts were not to go altogether unrewarded.

The very smallest chest of all yielded and was found to contain a heap of gold doubloons and ducats. But this was the extent of the galleon's treasure.

Frank estimated it at about ten thousand dollars in American money. Not a vast treasure, but for all that not despicable.

It was all placed in the smallest chest and then in signs Frank an-nounced his purpose to return to the Clipper.

The others were extremely agreeable.

So the chest was carried between them to the upper deck of the galleon. Here the location of the submarine boat was easily seen.

It was but a moment's work to slide down from the deck of the gal-leon to the bed of the sea.

Then all started for the Clipper.

Barney and Bill Brace had been waiting expectantly for their re-turn.

At the observation windows they could be seen now, and Barney danc-ed a jig in his delight.

"Begorra, there they are!" he cried. "Shure, they have the treas-ure between thim, too!"

"Hang me fer a harpooner, but ye're right, mate!" cried Brace.

"It's a quick trip and a safe one!"

A few moments later and the three divers clambered upon the deck of the submarine boat.

But just as they did so, a dark mass came shooting down from above.

It came so unexpected and so sudden, that there was no avoiding it. It struck the bow of the Clipper and careened the vessel over. There was terrible commotion in the water for a time.

CHAPTER IX.

A VICTIM OF THE TYPHOON.

So sudden had this catastrophe come upon the submarine voyagers that they were completely taken by surprise and off their guard.

Pomp and Frank were hurled to the deck. Clifford was already in the vestibule.

"Begorra, there's the devil to pay!" screamed Barney. "Shure, it's achored we are an' by a sunken ship!"

As the water cleared an astounding sight was revealed.

Across the submarine boat's ram lay the hulk of a small schooner-rigged boat. It had lateen sails and was evidently a Malay craft.

The astonishment of the submarine voyagers could hardly be imagined in words.

The boat was followed by articles of a lighter character, and which sank more slowly.

Among these were several drowned men. They were half naked and of the Malay type.

The truth could be divined at once that there had been a typhoon raging on the surface, and the light craft had foundered.

Clifford rushed out and putting his helmet against Frank's, shouted:

"What do you think of it, Frank?"

"There is a wreck!"

"Ought we not to try and rescue some of the crew?"

"Ah, I fear none of them are alive when they reach the bottom. It is very deep here."

"But shall we not make sure of that?"

"It would do no harm."

"Come along then!"

Clifford and Frank went over the side and Pomp followed them. In a moment they gained the side of one of the Malays.

But he was dead beyond all peradventure. Indeed, of the dozen found not one showed signs of life.

The Malay boat was badly shattered.

Her masts were blown out of her and she was split from stem to stern. But what concerned Frank very much was the fact that she lay exactly across the Clipper's bow.

It was necessary, of course, to dislodge her before the submarine boat could proceed.

At first this seemed like a serious problem. But Frank carefully examined the position of both boats, and made sure that the Clipper was not damaged.

Its metal ram was bent a trifle, but that was all.

Then Frank went aboard the Malay craft. It was loaded with barrels of oil.

The Malays had been upon some sort of a whaling voyage, and were doubtless returning to Malaysia with a goodly supply when so suddenly overtaken by disaster and death.

Frank went carefully over the boat, and speedily decided upon what was the best move to be made.

It would necessitate some hard work, but it was the safest and best move.

He communicated it to the others.

"It is simply to shift the cargo," he said, "by rolling some of the barrels over to the port side; she will list so that the ram will be able to extricate itself."

"If there is hard work of that kind to be done," cried Clifford, "why not call upon Brace, the sailor? He ought to be able to give us a big lift."

"Right!" agreed Frank. "Will you go back and get him, Pomp?"

"I will, sah," replied the darky.

He went hurriedly back. Brace was delighted with the prospect.

In a very short space of time he had a diving suit on and had joined the others.

He was the right man in the right place.

Being so powerful and active, it was easy work for him to roll the heavy barrels about with the greatest of ease.

It required several hours of hard work, but after a time the boat began to list.

Soon the ram was exposed and the submarine boat was freed.

There was no good reason for lingering longer in the vicinity, so all, by Frank's orders, went aboard the Clipper.

Barney was in the pilot house and cried.

"Shure, Mither Frank, shall I back the ship?"

"Yes!" replied Frank, "put on all the power you can!"

It taxed the dynamos a little, but with a steady pull the ram was extricated at last.

Now that the submarine boat was free and all were safe in the cabin again, mutual congratulations followed.

"What shall we do now, Frank?" asked Clifford.

"I am going to the surface to learn what it was sank the Malay boat!" declared Frank.

With which he pressed the reservoir lever. Up shot the Clipper.

It seemed a long ways to the surface, as indeed it was. When the Clipper leaped up into the light of day all rushed to the windows.

They were upon a calm and placid sea.

High overhead hung the sun like a ball of fire. Far in the distance was seen a receding yellow cloud.

This was the tornado which had wrecked the Malay boat beyond a doubt.

There was no other vessel in sight upon the broad expanse, nor even a coast line.

All was one great boundless expanse of rolling sea.

Frank took advantage of the opportunity to take his bearings. After awhile he announced that they were exactly upon the equator and half way from Ecuador to Borneo.

"It is strange that we are not in sight of some islands!" he declared. "We shall pass among legions of them on the rest of our journey."

This was true.

The balance of the voyage led through the very heart of Oceania. There were many archipelagoes upon the line of the equator.

But the cruise was to be a submarine cruise, so Frank sent the boat once more to the bottom.

Once more the Clipper was pursuing her submarine course and at full speed.

Much time had been lost in these stops which so far had been unavoidable. Frank endeavored to make up for lost time.

And it was this very fact which led to one of the most startling incidents of the whole trip.

For miles the Clipper had been speeding over a perfectly smooth and sandy plain.

Barney, who was in the pilot-house, had failed to note one important fact, owing to the peculiar magnifying effect of the water.

This was that the sandy plain trended upwards so very gradually, that the Celt never suspected that they were momentarily nearing the surface.

When this startling fact did dawn upon him it was too late.

Suddenly the submarine boat appeared to be in shallow water.

The electric lights began to pale, and Frank shouted:

"Hi, Barney, where are you taking us?"

"Begorra I don't know, sor!" cried the Celt, in dismay.

He sprang to the lever to reverse the speed of the propellers; but it was too late.

The Clipper suddenly shot up into daylight. Dead ahead to the horror of all was a coast.

Before the momentum of the Clipper could be in the slightest degree checked it had run far up on a sandy beach.

The shock threw everybody down and rattled things generally aboard the submarine boat.

And there lay the submarine boat high and partly dry on the sands. Words cannot express the dismay of all.

Frank Reade, Jr., was the first to recover.

He rushed into the pilot house and took swift observations of their position.

It was not encouraging.

"Ye gods!" he gasped, "it don't look now as if we should ever reach Borneo!"

"Run ashore, by Jericho!" cried Bill Brace, in dismay. "Well, this is a tough go and no mistake!"

"Begorra, phwat a fool I was!" groaned Barney. "Shure it's all me own fault, Mither Frank!"

"Not quite, Barney!" replied the young inventor; "the rise has been so gradual that it would have deceived anybody."

"You take it remarkably cool, Frank," declared Clifford.

"There is no better way to do," replied the young inventor, lugubriously.

"Is there any prospect of getting her off again?"

"I hope so!"

The spirits of all revived as Frank took such a cheerful view of the situation.

The forward quarter of the boat was high and dry. The water line came aft and submerged only a part of the deck.

It was easy enough to emerge from the pilot-house into the open air.

This the voyagers did.

The position of the submarine boat was seen to be almost a permanent one.

To all except Frank, it did not seem an easy thing to ever dislodge her.

But the young inventor seemed to feel certain of it. So this caused all to feel hopeful.

The coast line was a rough and picturesque one.

There were mighty cliffs of basalt, broken with chasms, through which trickled little streams.

High above the cliffs waved palms, and trailing vines hung over the edge.

It was no doubt one of the tropical isles so common in this part of the world. It was certainly unfortunate that it happened to be in the path of the Clipper.

The sun beat down hot and sultry. The air was stifling.

Altogether the outlook was dismaying.

"It don't look to me, Frank, as if we were going to get out of this scrape very easily!" ventured Clifford.

"Perhaps not," said the young inventor, coolly. "Well, if we have to leave the Clipper here, we shall surely have to count our trip from Ecuador to Borneo a failure!"

CHAPTER X.

THE FRIENDLY ISLAND.

"Which is an absolute shame!" declared the scientist. "It seems too bad that some of us did not see just where the boat was going."

"I'm a sculpin, myself, that I didn't see it," cried Bill Brace. "But I reckoned the wheelsman would know."

"Recriminations are of no avail now," declared Frank. "First of all, let us see what sort of a place this is we have struck."

"Golly, dat am de bes' fing I done fink!" cried Pomp.

"All right!" said Clifford, lightly. "Who will be first ashore?"

"Wait!" cried Frank. "Let us divide the party, and we must all go well armed."

"Correct, mates!" cried Bill Brace. "I'll take a blunderbuss, myself."

Pomp brought out firearms for all. He was to remain aboard the boat and defend it.

It was an easy matter to leap from the Clipper's deck down upon the sands.

Along the beach the party started. So hot was it that they were nearly wilted.

They had been traveling in the equable temperature of the deep sea for so long that they now felt the transition severely.

Indeed, Clifford was nearly overcome. It became necessary for all to "peel" almost to the bare skin.

Along the shore they trudged for a full mile.

There seemed no direct way of gaining the interior of the isle.

Thus far the cliffs had been all too precipitous to climb.

But now they came to a wide and deep pass.

A river flowed down through this to the sea.

But there was plenty of room to keep along the banks of this.

And now, as the party turned their steps into the interior of the isle they were rewarded with a scene of great natural beauty.

The forests which came down to the river's edge were of a splendid description, high arched and primeval.

The tops of the trees were so interlaced with with branches and vines that a soft and somber light always reigned under them.

It was like walking through the arches of some mighty cathedral. And of animal and bird life there was a surfeit.

Brilliantly plumaged birds flew through the foliage, lending it color; monkeys chattered on the wide-spreading limbs, and ran screaming away at the approach of the invaders.

It was a wonderful scene, and interested the voyagers much.

Of course it was all old to Bill Brace, who was constantly on the lookout for cannibals.

"Keep your weather eye open, mates," he declared. "We're apt to run agin 'em any minute."

But the four men, armed with repeaters, felt that they could stand a show against an army who had no weapons but those available at short range.

"Do you believe this island is inhabited?" asked Clifford.

"In course it is mate! Every one of these archipelagoes has tribes of natives in 'em. This island like enough is only one of a whole group!"

The words were barely out of Bill's mouth when a startling thing occurred.

Suddenly a peculiar drumming noise filled the air.

From behind trees, stumps and stones, and even out of hollow logs swarmed a legion of naked natives.

They were armed with the deadly blow pipes, so commonly used in the South Seas.

For a moment Frank Reade, Jr., fancied that they were to be attacked. But a second glance showed that the islanders were not hostile.

They all swarmed forward with arms uplifted in token of amity. They were friendly disposed.

Bill Brace came near precipitating matters. He flung his rifle to his shoulder, but Frank cried:

"Hold! don't fire! they are our friends!"

It was well known that certain of the island tribes were good friends to the white men, and were always eager to trade with them.

This was evidently one of those tribes, as Frank realized with joy.

The young inventor held up his arms in reply, and went quickly forward to meet their chief, a tall, handsome fellow, who came forward with a pleasant smile.

To Frank's surprise he addressed him in English.

"Great missionary welcome!" he said. "Ooloo glad he come!"

"Why!" exclaimed Frank, in surprise, "where did you learn our tongue?"

The native chief laughed with evident pleasure.

"Mister Francis, he live here with us. He a great missionary! He teach Ooloo how talk your way!"

Frank's face lit up.

He understood all now.

"Indeed!" he cried. "Is the missionary here now?"

"No," replied Ooloo. "He gone to other island. Come back some time."

Then Frank learned to his great gratification that the islanders were converts to Christianity and well along on the road to civilization.

Ooloo's people were a splendid set of natives, handsome and graceful, and generous to a fault.

In a few moments they were on the warmest of terms with the whites.

"Well, I'm keel hauled!" exclaimed Bill Brace, in amazement. "I didn't believe there was anything but cannibals in these islands!"

Ooloo's village was not far distant, and the voyagers accepted an invitation to go thither.

Here they found that part of the natives lived in huts of palm branch and straw thatch.

But the majority of them had substantial little houses of stone and mortar with wide verandas which the missionary had taught them to build.

A royal reception was given the voyagers.

Ooloo caused a couple of goats to be killed and roasted in their style. Then bananas and aloes, dates and other tropical fruits with fish made a repast really most toothsome.

The voyagers enjoyed the change of fare immensely and were deeply gratified.

Frank made the chief a present of a handsome clasp-knife, and his wife a gift of a gold ring.

These things delighted the natives greatly. After that the voyagers could own the isle if they chose.

After a while, however, the day began to wane, and Clifford said:

"Frank, had we not better begin to think of getting back to the Clipper?"

"Yes," agreed the young inventor, "we will go at once."

Again Frank thanked Ooloo, and then told him of their catastrophe and the position of the Clipper.

The native king was at once interested and cried:

"Say nothing! I take heap lot of my men and pull big canoe off!"

For a moment the possibility of this thing occurred to Frank.

Then he saw its impossibility.

"I am afraid that is not possible, Ooloo," he said, to the native ruler. "It is a very heavy boat."

"Never mind," cried the native, eagerly, "we try."

Frank could interpose no reasonable objection to this kind offer, and accordingly Ooloo caused a drum to beat, calling his men together.

In a few moments several hundred of them were thronged about their king.

Ooloo addressed them excitedly, and they answered him with cheers in their own tongue.

Some ran to fetch ropes, others brought large canoes, carrying them upon their heads.

"Begorra, perhaps they kin do phwat they say, Mister Frank," declared Barney.

"That's right," cried Bill Brace. "There's a heap of 'em to do the pulling!"

"That is very true," agreed Frank. "There is sufficient force to pull the boat all over the island, but to pull it off shore is another thing!"

All saw the logic of this, yet even Frank himself had some hope.

The immense concourse now set out for the spot where the Clipper was beached.

Pomp saw them coming from afar and was greatly alarmed.

At first he did not see his friends in the van and fancied it a mighty crowd of foes come to attack the Clipper.

He brought a huge pile of cartridges up into the cabin and loaded all the Winchesters on board.

"I jis' gib dem de hottest kind ob a reception," he declared excitedly, "dey be berry glad fo' to let dis chile alone!"

But fortunately before the plucky dorky drew a line on any of the party he recognized his friends, and at once comprehended the situation.

Then he rushed out on deck waving his arms joyfully.

Frank and the others were quickly aboard the Clipper.

The natives swarmed about, but only Ooloo ventured to come aboard.

Frank was pleased to show him entirely over the submarine boat and explain its mechanism to him.

The native chief was wonderstruck as well as delighted.

Barney and Pomp and Bill Brace meanwhile, had been striking up the best of acquaintances with the natives from the deck.

Ooloo made a critical examination of the position of the submarine boat and then said:

"We try hard to make you float; don't get afraid."

"If you can," cried Frank, "I will make you a handsome present."

Ooloo's eyes shone with delight.

"Yon see!" he said.

He turned and made a gesture to his followers. At once they advanced in a body and began to lift on the bow and stern of the boat.

Powerful fellows they were, and it actually seemed for a time as if they did really carry the boat forward some ways.

But yet it resisted their best efforts, refusing to leave its bed of mud.

CHAPTER XI.

THE WAR SHIP.

It seemed a pity that the well meant efforts of the natives were so abortive.

After a number of futile efforts the chief desisted, shaking his head in disappointment.

"Try capoes!" he said.

Full a hundred of the canoes were at once afloat. From each a rope was fastened to the Clipper.

But this attempt to draw the Clipper off was a most ignominious and complete failure.

The disappointment of Ooloo could not be concealed. He almost wept.

But finally he came to the rail of the Clipper and admitted his inability to do it.

"Can't pull boat off!" he said, dejectedly, "berry sorry! P'raps Mr. Francis, Missionary, can. He come to-morrow!"

Frank smiled at this implicit confidence in the ability of the missionary to perform this great wonder. No doubt they venerated him as one able to perform most any miracle.

"How do you expect Mr. Francis can do it?" asked Frank, with interest.

The chief replied eagerly:

"He ask God to do it. He refuse nothing if he be asked by Mr. Francis!"

Frank saw readily enough the misapplication of the missionary's teaching. But he deemed it unwise to attempt to correct the simple native.

"Well," said Clifford, coming to Frank's side now, "what are we going to do? It looks kind of dubious, don't it?"

"Yes," agreed Frank. "I think, however, we will find a way out of the difficulty."

But it was evident that nothing more could be done that day.

Darkness was thickly setting down and the natives now retired to the higher sands.

But they did not return to their village.

Instead, they built fires upon the cliffs and seemed inclined to spend the night there.

They reveled in the wondrous radiance of the powerful search light, which they were utterly unable to understand.

Thus the night passed.

With the going down of the sun the air became cooler and the voyagers all slept well.

When morning came all were early astir.

The morning meal had hardly been indulged in when the chief Ooloo came excitedly aboard.

"Mr. Francis, he coming!" he cried. "He pull boat off for you!"

Frank at once went out on deck.

A white sailed craft was coming along the coast. It was a small sloop.

As it anchored a short ways from shore a small boat put off and soon came ashore.

It contained besides two native oarsmen a couple of white men.

One of these was attired in the somber black garb of the Christian minister.

The other wore the gold laced uniform of the navy.

They seemed to be regarding the stranded boat with not a little of surprise.

Ooloo ran to greet them, and began in his broken English to explain matters to them.

At once they came along the beach, and Frank stepped down from the deck to meet them.

"Good-morning to you, my friend!" cried the missionary, in a hearty way. "I see that you and your craft is in sore trouble."

"You are right, sir!" replied Frank. "Is this Mr. Francis?"

"It is!"

"I have heard your praises sung by Ooloo here. I am glad to meet you. I am an American, Frank Reane, Jr., of Readestown, and this is my submarine boat the Clipper. At an inopportune moment we were stranded here, as you can see!"

"Indeed, Mr. Reade, I am glad to meet you!" replied the missionary. "This is my friend, Captain Purinton, to the U. S. ship Pawnee!"

"Pleased to meet Mr. Reade!" replied the naval officer politely. "I believe the name is quite familiar to me!"

"Indeed!" said Frank, with pleasure.

"Are you not the inventor?"

"I am an inventor!"

"I remember that the Navy Department tried to buy from you the secret of your submarine boat long ago!"

"Yes!" replied Frank, "that is correct. But I would not sell it for the purposes of war!"

"Yet you are sufficiently patriotic to realize that the secret would be of great value to the United States in case of war with a foreign nation?"

"If my country was in jeopardy," replied Frank, "I would not hesitate to build them all the submarine boats they wanted. But until then I prefer to keep the secret!"

The captain laughed.

"I can see your point!" he said, and you may be justified. "However, you and I will not quarrel upon that point!"

"I should hope not!" said Frank, warmly.

"Well, Mr. Reade!" said the missionary, earnestly, "in what way can we help you out of your trouble?"

"You are very kind," replied Frank. "If you know any way to draw me off this shoal you will confer the greatest favor upon me."

Captain Purinton looked critically at the submarine boat.

"Why, that is a light craft!" he said. "The Pawnee ought to be able to draw that off!"

Frank gave an eager exclamation.

"What is your ship," he asked, "sail or steam?"

"Steam," replied the captain.

"Is it near here?"

"Not a dozen miles, in a harbor of the adjoining island."

"If you would be so good as to try it," declared Frank, "I feel sure that you could draw us off with two cables anyway."

"I have the cables," replied the captain, "and it shall be done. I hope for success."

This was joyful news indeed for the voyagers.

Frank took Francis and the captain aboard and a general introduction followed.

Then Frank took his visitors over the submarine boat, which pleased them greatly.

"Indeed," declared Captain Purinton, "I would be tempted to give up my commission aboard the Pawnee to captain a craft like this."

It was decided to make the effort with the Pawnee to draw the submarine boat from the shoal at once.

The captain and the native sailors went back aboard Mr. Francis' sloop and returned to the war ship.

It was early in the afternoon when a whistle was heard, and all saw the Pawnee steaming majestically along to a position off shore.

When arrived at what was deemed a good position the cables were sent out in the steamer's small boats.

The marines were soon alongside, and had fastened them to the Clipper's bow.

This done, the signal was given.

It was a critical moment.

There were many who feared that the big cables would snap like strings before the strain.

But they did not.

There was a terrific tension. The huge cables stretched and then stood taut. For an instant they seemed to remain thus.

It was the crisis. Either something must yield or they must break. The suspense was intense.

Suddenly the submarine boat was seen to move. Slowly it slid seaward, but every moment the strain became less.

Wild cheers went up.

It became at once apparent that the day was saved. The submarine boat would float once more.

Steadily the stanch Pawnee drew seaward. Now the release of the Clipper was certain.

A few moments, and she was once more afloat. It was a moment of great joy.

The cables were cast off and taken up. Frank started the electric engines.

He sailed straight for the Pawnee and soon was alongside.

Flag salutes were exchanged and the Pawnee fired a broadside ere returning to her anchorage.

Frank shouted his thanks to Captain Purinton from the quarterdeck or bridge of the Clipper.

Then he sent a message ashore for Missionary Francis and with presents for Ooloo in one of the native canoes which crowded about the Clipper.

Once more the Clipper was ready to proceed on her cruise to far-away Borneo.

Straight out to sea the submarine boat sailed. Then Frank pressed the reservoir lever.

Down she went again to the bottom of the sea.

The island with its green verdure, the sky with its banks of clouds vanished as if by magic.

Down again into the depths went the Clipper.

The most thrilling incident of the voyage had terminated.

But more thrilling ones were in store. Time was to bring them to pass in its own way.

Through coral forests, over rugged valleys, across sandy plains the Clipper sped on.

Days passed into weeks.

There was no danger of again running aground. The keenest of a watch was kept.

Many islands were encountered, but all were passed around safely. The submarine boat kept closely to its course.

Life aboard the Clipper had its pleasant routine and did not seem to grow tedious.

There was always plenty of diversion for Clifford in looking at the wonders of the deep from the observation windows.

Barney and Pomp often furnished the best of amusement for the company with banjo and violin.

Their witty jokes and sayings also were much enjoyed. Thus the time passed and every day the submarine boat drew nearer and nearer to its destination, wild Borneo.

CHAPTER XII.

WHICH IS THE END OF THE TALE.

ONE day Frank sent the Clipper to the surface to take bearings. To his surprise they came up in sight of land.

It was a long and rugged coast and lay to the south of them.

"Upon my word!" he cried. "We must be further on our way than I had dreamed of."

"What land do you believe that to be, Frank?" asked Clifford.

"If I were to express my conviction it is the coast of New Guinea!"

"New Guinea!" gasped Clifford. "Why, we must then be near the end of our journey?"

"We are very near it. From here to Borneo we must make a detour, however, around the Isle of Celebes. We will go to the north through the Celebean Sea and strike Borneo by way of Labnan!"

"Well!" said the young scientist, drawing a deep breath, "of course I am gratified with the success of our trip. Yet I am loth to see it come to an end!"

Frank laughed.

"Be not so sure that you have seen its end yet," he declared. "You know we have got to go home."

"Ah! how will you go from Borneo? Back over the same route?"

"By no means," replied Frank. "If nothing occurs to prevent I shall keep on homeward around the Cape of Good Hope."

"Making a literal circuit of the globe!"

"Exactly."

The young scientist was delighted.

"I need only say that all this is the happiest experience of my life!" he declared.

"I am glad of that!" said Frank. "I hope that you are well satisfied."

"I shall remember you as my greatest benefactor!" declared Clifford.

Frank proceeded to take his bearings. To his great satisfaction he found that his surmise was correct.

The coast line visible to the southward was indeed that of the isle of New Guinea.

There were plenty of evidences visible that they were in the region of Oceania.

Lateen sailed crafts, piragues and all manner of native vessels were visible on the horizon.

For a ways the Clipper sailed on the surface and a good look at these could be had.

But as soon as Frank had finished his observations he sent the Clipper to the bottom again.

In no place here was the sea of great depth.

All was shining sand with beautiful shell fish and submarine plants.

Not since leaving Ecuador had so charming a part of the sea been encountered.

It would have been a delight to have remained long in these entrancing depths.

But Frank was anxious to reach his destination so he sent the Clipper along.

Darting through the translucent depths there were times when the light craft raced for many yards with giant sharks.

These were plentiful, and indeed were the bane of the depths.

For this reason no diving expedition was ventured upon, though Clifford saw many charming specimens that he yearned for.

But all things must have an end, and that of the Clipper's voyage came suddenly and almost ended in a tragedy.

One day Frank announced that they were in the Celebean sea.

"The west coast of Borneo is not twenty miles from us," he said.

"We shall now sail northward and round Labnan, to the city or town of Borneo."

The words had hardly left Frank's lips, when a pistol-like report was heard.

Instantly everybody sprung up.

"What was that?" cried Clifford.

"We've struck suthin', mate!" cried Bill Brace.

But Frank Reade, Jr., started at once for the engine room. Before he could reach it he knew that there was some accident to the machinery.

The boat was shooting upward with alarming speed.

Thrilled with dread apprehension, Frank darted down into the engine-room. He saw the truth at a glance.

One of the electric shafts had snapped. This had closed the water out of the reservoir and caused the boat to come to a stop.

It was the worst possible sort of a mishap, and extremely difficult to repair.

In fact it seemed irreparable. Of course, if Frank had the resources of his machine shops at hand he could, no doubt, effect this.

He stood for a moment aghast.

Clifford and Barney were now by his side.

"Is it serious, Frank?"

"Begorra, it's busted intoirely we are!" cried the Celt, in dismay.

"An' shure there's a big storm coming up, Misther Frank!"

"A big storm?" gasped Frank.

"Yis, sor!"

"Then we are lost unless we can get ashore?" groaned the young inventor, "we must do something desperate."

With this Frank rushed on deck.

The truth was before him.

Scores of light sailed crafts were making for the protection of a little bay near.

If the submarine boat could have reached the protection of that, all would have been well.

But it lay like a log in the trough of the sea. There was no possible way to propel it.

What was to be done?

The horizon was overhung with a mighty yellow pall, which was racing up to the zenith.

Frank understood the character of the storm well. It was one peculiar to those latitudes, and the light boat could not hope to live in it.

What was to be done?

Again the agonizing query flashed through Frank's brain. For once in his life he was at a loss for a plan.

There was certainly only one course to pursue to save the lives of all on board. And even this was likely to fail.

This was to set the Clipper's rudder and run her before the gale straight ashore.

If she succeeded in beaching herself out of reach of the waves all on board could at least manage to get ashore.

This would be something. If the boat could not be saved certainly the next proper thing to look out for was self-preservation.

Frank communicated this plan to the others.

It met with instant approval.

"It's our only salvation, mate!" cried Bill Brace. "I'll hold the helm if ye say so!"

Nearer the storm was drawing every moment.

The spectacle was a most frightful one. A great wall of water many feet high was rushing out of the horizon.

Bill Brace needed not a second glance to shriek:

"My God, messmates, it's a tidal wave!"

"A tidal wave!" gasped Clifford. "Then we are all doomed!"

"Don't say that!" cried Frank Reade. "Stand firm all!"

The next moment the advance wave struck the Clipper.

What followed was never distinctly remembered by any on board.

There was a fearful spell of chaos of whirling and twisting and rending. Of fearful crashing and leaping through space.

Bill Brace attempted to cling to the boat's helm.

But she was past minding it. On and on she was hurled in the darkness and horror. Ten thousand thunders dazed the brains of all.

Would the end never come? Why was death so slow?

These were the thoughts which flashed across the minds of the voyagers. But just then the end came.

There was a terrific crash, all were hurled into insensibility, and then—then there was a void.

Frank Reade, Jr. was the first to recover. He crept out from under a heap of debris.

As he did so, Barney near him began to revive. In a few moments all the voyagers, bruised and sore, were upon their feet. None had suffered fatal injury.

But there was sunlight all about them. The transition was so sudden and astounding as to be almost incomprehensible.

Clifford staggered to the observation window and looked out.

"Hi!" he cried. "Would you believe it, we are on land!"

"On land!"

All rushed to the window. The scene which they beheld was one without a parallel.

The Clipper lay high and dry upon a small eminence. Below was a stretch of green slope, fully half a mile to the blue rolling sea in the distance.

The country presented a woe-begone appearance.

Wreckage, and even huge chunks of coral, heaps of sand and dead fish lay about everywhere.

Whatever the tidal wave had caught in its course was brought high and dry on shore.

The submarine boat was terribly battered and damaged beyond all possible hope of repair.

Slowly and sadly the voyagers descended from the deck, and took a mournful survey of the region into which they had been cast.

What it held for them they could only guess. Possibly savage foes, or deadly reptiles, or man-eating beasts.

"This is rather a hard ending of our voyage," said Clifford, "but if we could only reach a friendly seaport now, we could at least pay our passage home."

"Right," cried Frank. "We have at least the pirate gold."

"And that may partly reimburse you for your sad loss," said Clifford, with renewed spirits.

Just at this moment a party of armed men were seen approaching. That they were Europeans was certain, so our adventurers felt no fear.

As they came nearer they hailed the castaways.

"Who are you?" Frank shouted.

"We are officers of the British North Borneo Company!" was the reply. "Do not fear, for we are friends."

Very quickly the British colonists were on the spot, and explanations and introductions quickly followed.

The colonists were astonished and interested by Frank's account of the cruise from Ecuador.

"It is only a mile to our settlement," said one of the officers.

"An English steamer will sail from here for Melbourne next week. There you can get plenty of vessels bound for San Francisco."

There was no way but to abandon the Clipper.

All articles of value were taken from her and shipped aboard the British steamer Swan, for Melbourne. The great cruise of the submarine boat was at an end.

In due course the Swan reached Melbourne, and passage home was procured by the voyagers.

At San Francisco, Bill Brace took leave of the party. He had secured a mate's berth on a Puget Sound line of steamers, and said:

"I might as well go back to the sea, mates. It's my nature, and old Davy Jones will claim me in the end. Good-bye and God bless ye!"

Frank Reade, Jr., Barney and Pomp went back to Readestown.

Clifford Carlton returned to his home with a host of experiences to relate to envious scientific friends.

Not to be defeated by the reverses of the trip, Frank at once began work on a new invention. And at this propitious point let us write.

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